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THE BASIS FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN YOGA THERAPY

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THE BASIS FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN YOGA THERAPY

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SUMMARY The basis for an integrated approach for Yoga Therapy rooted in Upaniṣats and Yoga texts is presented in this report. After presenting a general classification of ailments, the science of psychosomatic diseases is described.

The origin of diseases at Manomaya Kośa level (a subtle sheath of our existence) percolates to the gross physical frame through Prāṇamaya Kośa in which disturbances in the flow of Prāṇa and instability of the Nādis are caused.

The integrated approach is to harmonise and calm down the disturbances at all these levels by Kriyās, Physical exercises, Āsanās, Breathing and Prāṇāyāma, Meditation and Devotional session, Analysis and Jñāna Yoga.

The results of this approach presented elsewhere has shown promising applicational value.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga is becoming popular in different parts of the world. For the restless mind it gives solace¹! For the sick, it is a boon^{2,4,6,25, 18B} * For a common man it is the fashion of the day to keep himself fit and beautiful^{5,13}. Some use it for developing memory, intelligence and creativity^{1,3}. With its multifold advantages it

is becoming a part of education^{3,16}. Specialists use it to unfold deeper layers of consciousness in their move towards perfection^{8,14}.

Because of its rational basis, the modern medical system has replaced almost all the traditional systems of medicine in different parts of this globe. It has proved itself most effective in saving man from the fatal hands of contagious and infectious diseases¹². However, new widespread

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psychosomatic ailments are posing a great challenge to the modern medical system. It is here that Yoga appears to make a vital contribution to the modern medical system. In our earlier report⁷ we have presented the basic principles and preliminary results of Yoga Therapy. In contrast to the different methods of Yogic Therapy using one⁴ or more^{6,18B} of the Yoga Practices, we have used an integral approach in treating various ailments⁷. We present in this report the basis of such an approach¹⁸. An attempt is made to present this basis in tune with the Yoga tradition, culled out from the original texts of Upanishats and Yoga^{18,19}.

2. CONCEPT OF HEALTH AND YOGA

According to the World Health Organisation ('WHO') the state of Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.¹² 'WHO' also suggests a fourth dimension-spiritual Health. It is clear from this definition that health and ill-health are not two discrete entities as commonly understood but health should be conceived as a continuous function indicating the state of well being (Figure 1). In the diagram, the 3rd quadrant "the region of ill-health" represents what normally we designate as 'Sickness'. Below this, man acts instinctively and is akin to an animal man. * Coming to the first quadrant, the

region of 'Normal Man' the state of normal health is indicated. As one moves along the line further up, he becomes healthier featured by the dormant faculties expressing more vividly in man. This is shown as the region of Super Man, the next region after the human spectrum. In this state, the limitations of normal man namely the strong urges of thirst, hunger, fear and sex are reduced greatly and are fully under control. In the concept of Sri Aurobindo¹⁷, the new faculties of deeper perceptions of the world beyond the five senses emerge in this phase of super-human existence. Further growth leads man to unfold even deeper layers of consciousness and widen the spectrum of his knowledge to move towards divinity or perfection. In this march towards perfection, Yoga is a systematic conscious process for accelerating the growth of a human being from his animal level to normalcy, then to super human level and ultimately to divinity. It is a systematic methodology for an all round personality development-physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components-of man. Thus, Yoga in its general methodology for the growth of man to divine heights includes techniques useful for therapeutic applications in making man healthier.

Before we proceed to understand the generation and amplification of illnesses, we present in the next section the Yogic concept of 'Sheaths of human existence'.

*

आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनञ्च सामान्यमेतत् पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।

बुद्धिर्हि तेषामधिको विशेषः बुद्धेर्विहीनः पशुभिः समानाः ॥

Food, Sleep, Fear & Procreation (instinctive actions) are common to men and animals. It is the conscious thinking faculty, the power of discrimination that characterises man.

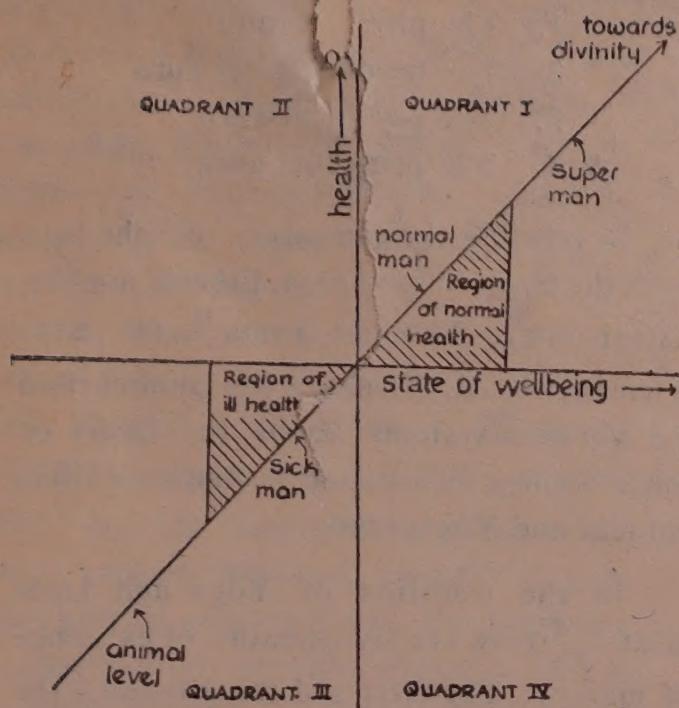
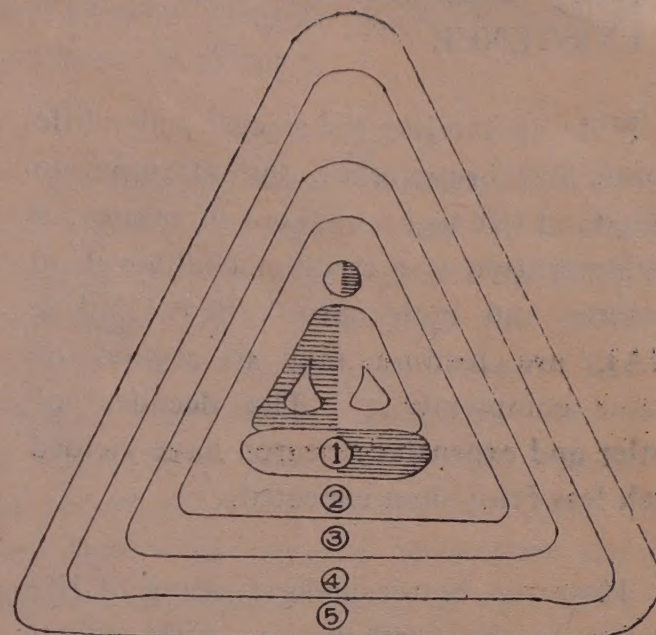


Figure 1. Concept of Health



- 1 ANNAMAYA KOŚA 2 PRĀNAMAYA KOŚA
3 MANOMAYA KOŚA 4 VIJÑĀNAMAYA KOŚA
5 ANANDAMAYA KOŚA

Figure 2.

The five Sheaths (Kośas) of our existence

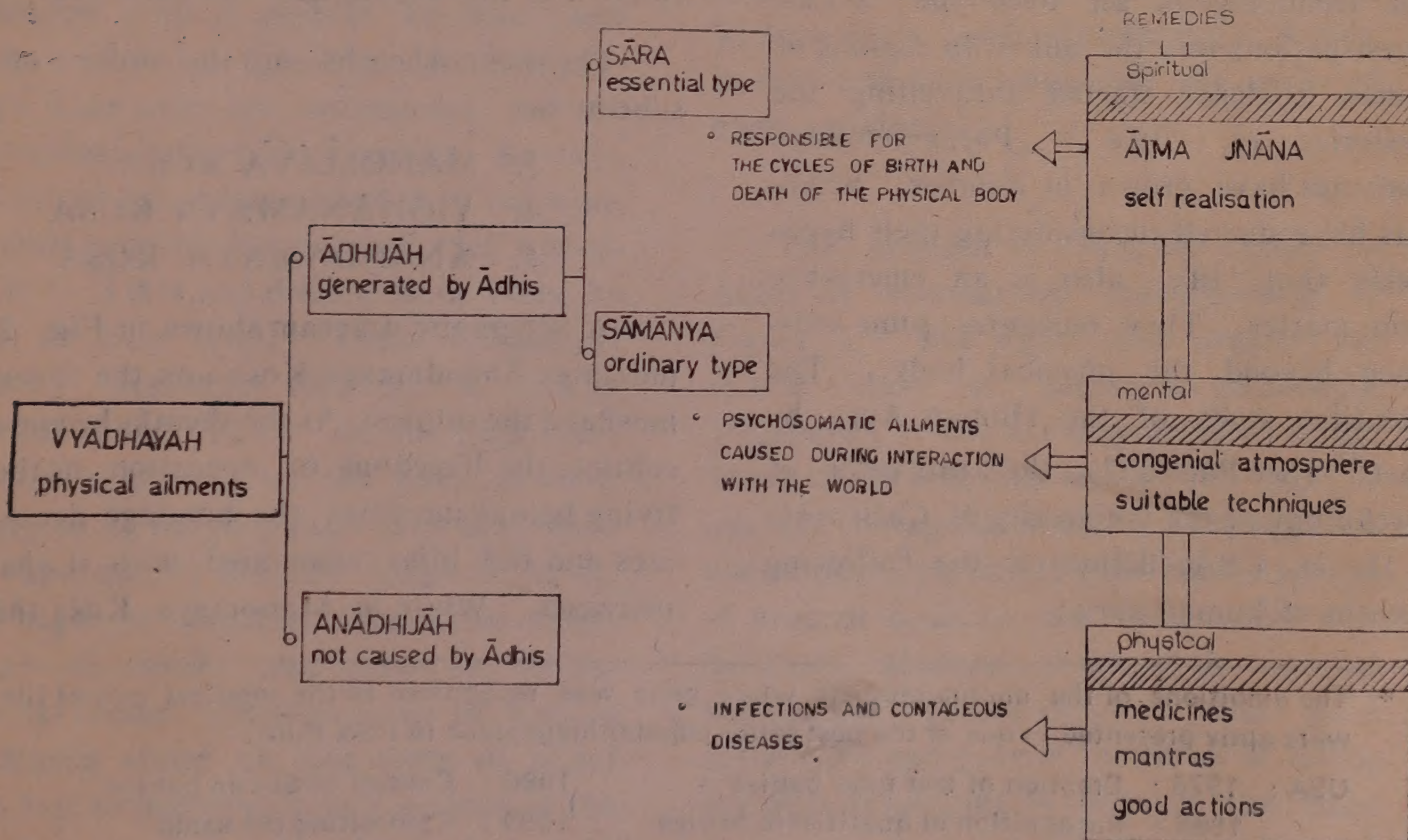


Figure 3. A Schematic Diagram of our Ailments (See Appendix 1)

1. The physical aura
2. The psychological aura
3. The psychical aura
- & 4. The projected aura.

In relating the experience of the psychics the terms human aura, Etheric double, Astral body, Thought-forms¹⁵ etc have often been used. Nirmala⁸ has summarised the various systems about the layers of consciousness as depicted in Indian philosophical and Yogic texts.

In the tradition of Yoga and Upaniṣats*, there are five sheaths of existence of man¹³. The first and the grossest - the physical frame which we are all so familiar is called ANNAMAYA KOŚA. The second subtler sheath is the 'PRĀṆAMAYA KOŚA' featured by the predominance of Prāṇa, the life principle. Through the invisible channels called NĀDIS in this sheath flow the PRĀṆA.

The next sheaths in the order of subtlety are

3. MANOMAYA KOŚA
4. VIGNĀNAMAYA KOŚA
5. ĀNANDAMAYA KOŚA

A Schematic diagram shown in Fig. 2 indicates Ānandamaya Kośa as the inner most and the subtlest. As the sheaths become subtler, the freedom of operation in the living beings increases, the bondage decreases and the bliss associated with it also increases. While in Manomaya Kośa the

Notwithstanding the sincere and subtle (atomic level) researches, the attempts to understand life as an offshoot of matter, a conglomeration of a complex configuration of atoms and molecules (called DNA & RNA), are leading man to regions of greater complexity.* The decades of subtler and expensive research have yielded much less fruit than expected.

However, better understanding of life appear to be forthcoming with efforts directed in fields of modern psychology¹⁰ and Parapsychology.¹¹ The forerunner of many of these efforts could be traced back to the work of Kirlian^{19,13,17}. Controversies apart, Kirlian photography triggered the interest of a large number of scientists and technologists all over the world. Investigations into the unknown regions of human existence started unravelling the mysteries of 'life'. Parapsychology Institutes have grown in number. Scientists have started reconsidering their hypothesis that 'life' also is an emergence from matter. They recognize some existence beyond the physical body. The scientific study of the Human Aura by Tart¹⁵ (See Page 137), the professor of psychology at the University of California at Davis, USA, delineates the following sheaths of human aura :

* The ambitions of the microbiologists when gene was recognised as the smallest unit of life, were aptly presented in one of the best seller popular magazines in USA thus :

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| USA : 1975 : Creation of test tube babies | 1980 : Control of Sex in babies |
| 1985 : Recognition of qualities in babies | 1990 : Controlling the same |
| 2000 : Birth of the genius ! | |

'What would happen if many Hitlers are born?' the best-seller cautioned the micro-biologists !

* Standard International code is used to transliterate Sanskrit words and lines.

creative power predominates, in Vignānamaya Kośa it is the power to discern and discriminate. Bliss is embodied in Ānandamaya Kośa, the highest stage of evolution in the manifested existence. It is the subtlest among the 5 sheaths of existence. In his journey towards the Ultimate, Man crosses these sheaths of existence one by one. Through analysis, called 'Panca Kośa Viveka' (Knowing through experience his 5 sheaths of existence)¹⁸ and the associated practices called 'Tapas' man transforms himself by gradually getting relieved from the bondages and constrictions of each sheath. This is one of the methods of reaching the ultimate goal enumerated and described in the Upaniśats.

4. THE SCIENCE OF ILLNESSES :

In Ānandamaya Kośa a man is the healthiest with a perfect harmony and balance of all his faculties. At Vijnānamaya Kośa there are movements, but are channelised in the right direction. As such, it is in the Manomaya level that imbalances start, say the Yoga texts (See Appendix 1)⁹. Likes and dislikes have come to play at this level. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called 'Ādhis'. At this stage there are no symptoms at the physical level. Prompted by the perpetual growth of desires, these mental diseases congeals in us, they begin to manifest themselves externally. Gradually they percolate to the physical frame. Preponderance of Ajnāna (ignorance about his real state of bliss) leads him to perform wrong actions as the eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing things at untimely hours, injuries inflicted, association

with the wicked, evil thoughts etc. These breed physical diseases called Vyādhis or the secondary diseases.

The Ādhis (primary diseases) are two fold-Sāmānya (ordinary) and Sāra (the essential). The former includes the diseases incidental to the body while the latter the rebirth to which men are subject. The Sāmānya are normally produced during the interactions with the world. These may be termed as Psychosomatic Ailments. When dealt with suitable techniques and congenial atmosphere, Ādhis of this ordinary type will vanish. Along with it are destroyed the physical ailments, Vyādhis, caused by these Ādhis (Ādhijāḥ Vyādhayaḥ). The subtler Ādhis of the essential type, 'Sāra' which cause the birth of the physical body can be destroyed only by the Realization of the causal states of mind and a corresponding ability to live in Vijnānamaya and Ānandamaya Kośas. In that case, man transcends the cycles of birth and death.

This concept of Vyādhis caused by Ādhis is summarised schematically in Figure 3. The figure also depicts the second class of ailments - Anādhijāḥ Vyādhayaḥ - those not originated by mind. These would probably include the infectious and contagious diseases. Through the conventional medicines (the chemotherapy of modern medicine can come under this heading), Mantras (with their natural vibrational characteristics) and good actions (bringing about the purity of mind, the bliss developing in the body, the Prāṇa flowing freely and the food getting digested and assimilated properly) the diseases will get vanished.

5. THE PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESSES

Among the two types of Ādhis, described in the previous section the Sāmānya (ordinary) type corresponds to the modern psychosomatic ailments. The details as to the genesis and destruction of these psychosomatic ailments are presented in the second portion of Appendix 1. (Sloka 15 onwards).

When the Mind is agitated during our interactions with the world at large, the physical body also follows its wake. These agitations cause violent fluctuations in the flow of Prāṇa in the Nādis. The Prāṇa flows in wrong paths flying from one to other without rhythm and harmony. The Nādis can no more, in this condition, maintain stability and steadiness, but quiver. Due to these disturbances in the Prāṇa and unsteadiness in the Nādis, the food does not get properly digested. There arises KUJĪRṆATVAM (wrong digestion) AJĪRṆATVAM (Non digestion) and ATIJĪRṆATVAM (Over Digestion).

When this improperly digested food settles down in the body amidst such commotion, it results in ailments of the psychosomatic type. This process of Ādhi becoming Vyādhī is shown schematically in Figure 4. Contained in this process of generation of psychosomatic ailments is the method for treating such ailments.

6. THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

Referring to the schematic in Figure 2, we can now see that the disturbances in the MANOMAYA KOŚA percolates into the physical sheath (Annamaya Kośa) through the Prāṇamaya Kośa. Hence, in the treatment of these psychosomatic ailments it becomes mandatory to work at all these levels of our existence to bring about the quickest results. The integrated approach, thus, consists in not only dealing with physical sheath, the relief of which could at best be temporary (as is happening with the drugs used in modern medicine to treat diseases of the psychosomatic type like Asthma, Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, etc.) but also using techniques to

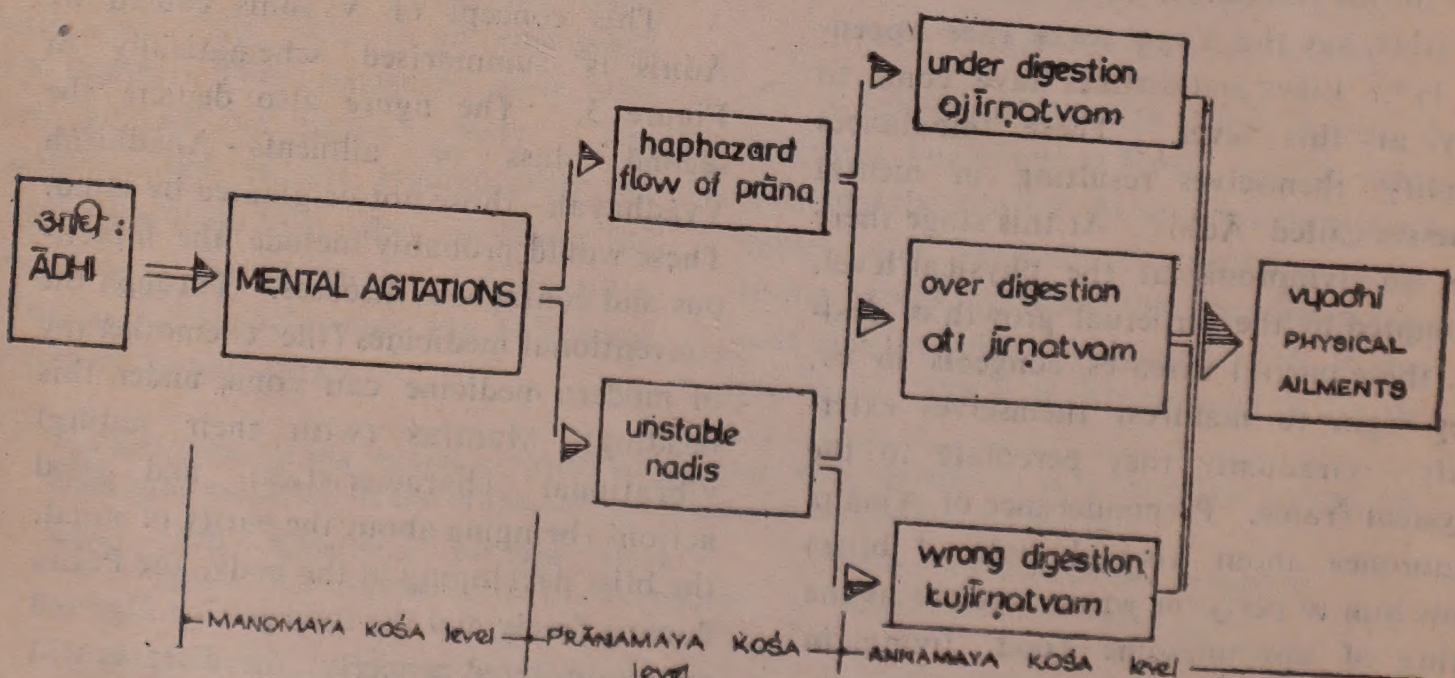


Figure 4. The Science of Psychosomatic Ailments

operate on the sheaths of our existence. The large number of Yogic practices available in the texts of Yoga and Upaniṣats are adopted to balance and harmonise the disturbances at each of the Kośas and tackle this set of complex psychosomatic ailments.

(A) ANNAMAYA KOŚA : The Physical Sheath

Kriyas, physical movements and Yogasanas⁶ are used to operate at the Annamaya Kośa level and to remove the physical symptoms of the ailments.

(i) Kriyas are Yogic processes described in Hatha Yoga to cleanse the inner organs of our body. They bring about the following effects^{28, 23} :

- (a) Activating and revitalising the organs
- (b) Toning up their functions
- (c) Desensitization

and (d) Development of deep internal awareness. Among the major Kriyas enumerated in the texts on Yoga^{20, 23}, simplified versions of a few Kriyas²⁰ like catheter Neti, Jala Neti, Kapala bhati, Agnisara, Vaman Dhouti (Kunjal Kriya) etc. are used extensively.

(ii) Physical exercises and Movements

Very simple physical movements to mobilise and activate particularly affected parts of the body are used. Some easy physical exercises are adopted²⁶ to fulfil the needs of the particular ailments to :

- (a) loosen the joints
- (b) stretch and relax the muscles
- (c) improve the forebearance power

and (d) develop stamina.

(iii) Yogāsanas :

Yogasanas are physical postures often imitating the natural positions of the animals meant to tranquil the mind. Through these postures are brought the physical revitalization and deep relaxation, and mental calmness. Appendix 2 details out the characteristic of Yogasanas, clearly distinguishing them from physical exercises.

(B) PRĀṆAMAYA KOŚA : The sheath of Prāṇa.

Prāṇa is the basic life principle. Prāṇāyāma is a process for gaining control over Prāṇa. Appendix 3 describes the 5 manifestations of Prāṇa in the human system as depicted in Praśnopaniṣat^{18A} and the corresponding most comprehensive definition of Prāṇāyāma. Also the conventional Prāṇāyāma through regulation of breath is described therein. Differences between normal breathing, Kriya and Prāṇāyāma are clearly depicted.

Through the practice of proper breathing, Kriyas and Prāṇāyāma, we start operating on the Prāṇamaya Kośa. Suitable types of prāṇāyāma and breathing help to remove the random agitations in Prāṇic flows in the Prāṇamaya Kośa. Thus, the ailments are handled at this Prāṇamaya Kośa level.

(C) MANOMAYA KOŚA

A direct operation on this level is made possible by the last 3 limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga of Patanjali ^{17A}—Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi. The culturing of mind is accomplished by focussing of the mind (Dhāraṇa) initially and followed by relaxed dwelling of the mind in a single thought (Dhyāna) for longer and longer durations leading ultimately to superconsciousness (Samādhi). A progressive habituation allows the mind to remain relaxed during the period of meditation (Dhyāna). The benefits of Transcendental Meditation, a simple standardised technique are numerous, interesting and noteworthy ^{1,3}. Its application to treat many psychosomatic ailments has become popular ^{1,3,5,8}.

To handle and gain control over the basic cause for mental agitations, we use the Yoga techniques to control our emotions. A devotional session containing Prayers, Chants, Bhajans, Namavalis, Dhuns, Stotras etc., help to build a congenial atmosphere to evoke, recognise, attenuate and dissipate the emotions. Thus, control over emotions is obtained through the devotional session. The emotional imbalances and upsurges are eliminated by such control.

(D) VIJNĀNAMAYA KOŚA

A basic understanding is the key to operate from Vijnānamaya Kośa. Upaniṣats are the treasury of such knowledge which is the redeemer of all miseries and obsession. It is the lack of that inner Jnāna which is responsible for many wrong habits, agitations etc. The Happiness Analysis—Ānanda Mimāṃsa—of the Taittiriya Upaniṣat handles the most funda-

mental problem relevant to all living creatures. The analysis ^{18A, 27} systematically leads the reader to that substratum from which Prāṇa and mind emerge—the Ānanda Maya Kośa. It helps the person to change his attitude of greed and deep attachment to material possessions and enjoyments towards the realisation that happiness is within and 'each one of us' in our causal state is 'Ananda' embodied ^{5,14}. As a result, man's outlook in life changes. Knowledge burns the strong attachments, obsessions, likes and dislikes which are the basic reasons for the agitations of mind. The Sāra type of Ādhis can only be removed by this knowledge (Ātma-Jnāna or Self-Realisation) ¹⁴.

This integrated approach is being used in our Yoga Therapy and Research Centres at Kanyakumari and Bangalore. The participants of these Yoga Therapy courses are exposed to the various dimensions of human evolution as outlined above. Our earlier report No. VKYTRC/001/KK/80 summarised the results of our work on various psychosomatic ailments like Bronchial Asthma, Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension and cardiac problems, Digestive disorders etc. Future reports which are now in the offing deal with our more systematic and detailed work connected with the above ailments.

7. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

1. This report presents the basis of an Integral Approach used in the treatment of psychosomatic ailments posing a challenge to the modern medical world.

2. The approach has deep roots in Upaniṣats and texts on Yoga.

3. A classification of ailments and the science of illnesses as portrayed in Yogic text is presented.

4. Originating at the Manomaya Kośa level, the 3rd among the 5 sheaths of our existence, the agitation of mind cause imbalances and disturbances in the Prāṇamaya Kośa level. The disturbed Prāṇic flows and unstable 'Nādis', the channels of Prāṇa do not allow the food to be digested properly. Over digestion, under digestion and wrong digestion bring about physical symptoms at the grossest ANNAMAYA KOŚA level. This is the genesis of psychosomatic ailments.

5. Operating on all these Kośas to restore the balance is method for handling these complex ailments.

6. Yogic practices at the Annamaya Kośa level include Kriyas, physical movements, and exercises and Yogasanas. To restore the balance in the PRĀṆAMAYA KOŚA level, we use breathing and Prāṇāyāma. Operation at MANOMAYA level by Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samadhi (the direct method of controlling the mind—the ANTARANGA YOGA OF PATANJALI), coupled with Devotional session (to control the emotions and overcome the emotional imbalances and upsurges). Knowledge about the ailments and their genesis by AJNĀNA and wrong direction in our interactions with the world, as postulated in Upanisats (by Ananda Mimamsa - Happiness Analysis) help to operate at VIJÑANAMAYA level, leading to the healthiest state of bliss, ANANDAMAYA KOŚA.

APPENDIX—1 (Contd. from Page 8a)

This English translation is extracted from Ref. 9

Rāma interposed and said : Please enlighten me as to the origin and destruction of mental and bodily disease. In answer to this Vasiṣṭha continued : The pains that afflict the body are called the secondary diseases, whilst the Vāsanā-s that affect the mind are termed mental or primary diseases. We have reached our present state through the absence of the transcendental Jñāna, want of mastery over our sense-organs and the perpetual growth or desire and egoism in the mind. And our delusion becomes intensified in us by forgetting the degradation of our state through such causes. With the growth of such delusion, the mental disease also congeals in us like the snows of winter. When the intense desires of a person begin to manifest themselves externally and the Ajñāna in him preponderates, he performs fearful Karma-s and these in their turn breed bodily diseases. The body is further subject to diseases through such actions as the eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy countries, doing things at unseasonable hours, injuries inflicted, association with the wicked, longing after improper things, evil desires, bad thoughts, the distention and contraction of the orifices of the Nādi-s in the joints, etc. and the interrupted flow of the beneficial Prāṇa-s throughout the body—these cause the body to wither. These flourish in the form of diseases in the body, waxing and waning like the floods in a river during the different seasons. The body attracts effects to itself according to the nature of its countless affinities, good or bad, whether in previous

births or in the present one. Thus we see diseases, primary and secondary, arise through the fivefold Bhūta-s (elements).

Now listen, Oh Rāma, to the manner in which the two forms of disease, primary and secondary, are destroyed in two ways. The wise say that primary disease has two sub-divisions: sāmānya (ordinary) and sāra (essential). The former includes the diseases incidental to the body, while the latter the rebirth to which men are subject. If the diseases which afflict this body return to their primal then they are destroyed. Their primary causes being (bad) thoughts, if these thoughts are destroyed, all bodily diseases will vanish. But the disease of rebirth, coming under the head of sāra, will never go except through Ātma-jñāna. Is it possible to suppose that the misapprehension of a serpent in a rope can be removed except through the discovery of the real rope? But those grievous diseases of the body which do not arise through the original cause can be extirpated by mantra-s, medicine and the many means used by men well versed in medical lore. I need not expatiate upon this subject any further here.

Here Rāma asked Vasiṣṭha how mental diseases arise and how they are destroyed. Vasiṣṭha proceeded: When the Manas is agitated, then this body also follows in its wake. And when the body is agitated, then there is no proper perception of the things that are in one's way and Prāṇa flies from its even path on to a bad road, staggering like an animal wounded by an arrow. Through such agitation, Prāṇa, instead of pervading the whole body steadily and equally, vibrates everywhere at an unequal rate. Therefore the Nāḍī-s do not maintain a steady position, but

quiver. Then to the body which is the receptacle of food digested partially or completely, the Nāḍī-s are simply death, because of the fluctuation of the Prāṇa-s. The food which settles down in this body amidst such commotion is transformed into incurable diseases. Thus through the primary cause (of the mind) the disease of body is generated. If this primary cause be annihilated at its root then all diseases will be destroyed. Now hear of the path by which diseases may be removed by the uttering of Mantra-s. Like base gold which, when placed in the crucible, is transmuted through alchemical processes into pure gold, the mind is rendered unfailingly pure through true, virtuous and pure actions and by serving the wise. In the mind purified thus there is unalloyed bliss. Is not the whole world exhilarated with joy when the soft and delicious moon begins to shed its silvery light? If the mind becomes purified with true Sattva-guṇa, then Prāṇa-vāyu will begin to circulate freely throughout the body, the food taken will be digested properly and hence no diseases will arise. I have thus described to you the path by which the two kinds of diseases can be destroyed.

APPENDIX-2

Physical Exercises & Yogāsanas

Operation at the Annamaya Kośa level involves the use of physical movements, exercises and Yogic Postures. The first two are called Sithilikarana Vyayāma.

(A) ŚITHILIKARANA VYĀYĀMA ²⁰

Before we take up the practice of Asanas we have to prepare ourselves

thoroughly so that, the performance becomes easy as well as effective. Āsanās involve articulation and bending. Generally the joints are stiff and the muscles are tight, and the preparation is meant for loosening the joints and stretching so that the bending and articulation becomes easy.

Śīthīlikarāna Vyāyāma or the stretching and loosening exercises aim at such a preparation. These exercises are physical exercises, where predominantly bendings and stretchings are involved. A breathing pattern is also suggested for effectiveness. It is generally observed that if the practice of āsanās is taken up directly, there develops pain in the body. This pain is also avoided by doing the Śīthīlikarāna Vyāyāma. Though this Vyāyāma is at the physical level if we incorporate the relaxation in action it can be made highly beneficial. They bring about

- (i) Mobility of joints & flexibility of muscles.
- (ii) Develops physical stamina.

(A) PHYSICAL EXERCISES AND YOGIC PRACTICES

From times immemorial man is trying to be free from disease, to make his body handsome, to make it strong and ultimately make it immortal. The search for the fulfilment of these desires brought about the development of physical culture where various types of exercises are employed. The following is the broad classification of the various types of exercises that are in vogue today. Exercise can be broadly classified into two types (A) Passive and (B) Active. Under Passive type we have Massage and manipulation of muscles by

others, where the beneficiary is passive. Whereas in the Active type we have exercises emphasizing on different characteristics, which are enumerated below.

Strength : Body building and weight lifting utilizing the implements like barbells, dumb-bells and also vigorous exercises like pull ups and push ups etc.

Speed : Sports and athletics, etc.

Dexterity : Acrobatics, gymnastics, archery, fencing, lathi, boxing, etc.

Endurance : Under this category there are two subdivisions, namely those for Health and Hygiene-in which there are further subdivisions namely Yogic, and Non-Yogic involving practices of isometric type. The other is for Recreation in which walking, hiking swimming, games etc.

In the above classification for the purpose of getting the benefit from the course we can get common features involved in all Non-Yogic type of exercises. They involve speed, jerks and repetition. They are energy expending processes, working in the muscular and circulatory levels. The attitude of competition, showmanship and materialistic gain often develops tensions etc. Physiotherapy predominantly adopts these physical exercises and movements to treat several ailments connected with muscles, joints and nerves.

The mode of performing Yogāsanas differ from expert to expert. Looking at large, we can classify the systems of Yogāsanas into 2 categories :

(i) Dynamic Asanas :

This has transformation in the structure of the body as aim. As the name implies, the characteristics of this system of Yogasanas are speed and repetition. All the asanas involve the articulation of the spine-forward, backward lateral as well as twist. While the physical exercises (Non-Yogic) are effective on muscular and circulatory as well as respiratory systems, the Yogic exercises have an effect on nervous and glandular systems as well. The Dynamic Yogasanas stimulate the nervous and glandular systems resulting in evocation of energy. This energy combats laziness by shattering Tamas and gives rise to Rajas (activity). This particular system is recommended for children as well as people who are lethargic. The Suryanamaskar and Śīthilikaraṇa Vyāyāma can be included in this system of dynamic Yogasanas as it is a combination of different asanas, and involves speed. The practice is accompanied by Yamas (Restraints) and Niyamas (Observations).

(ii) Yogasanas of the second type :

Relaxing Asanas :

The aim of this system is to develop an inner awareness and unfold the higher levels of consciousness. Continuity in movement, that is, without jerks, slowness and maintenance characterise this system. This results in strength and forbearance—Titikṣā. There is also a proportionate growth of the body. The control of food and other Yamas and niyamas are the companions of this system. While the non-yogic exercises and dynamic Yogasanas effect in expenditure of energy and perspiration, the Yogasanas based on Pantanjali's Aphorisms result in deep

relaxation and energy conservation, resulting in freshness. This is basically a nerve culture as it calms down the nerves.

(B) STAGES IN YOGASANAS :

Most people are of the opinion that Yogasanas are meant for keeping the body fit and healthy. In other words they limit the asanas to physical exercises. It is just like going to a millionaire and asking for a rupee !

'Asanas' forms one 'anga' or limb of Pantanjali's eight limbed Yoga. This means that he has introduced it with a specific purpose of utilizing the body of which most of us are aware to develop an inner awareness and thus reach higher consciousness. We saw in the earlier discussion that Yogasanas help us to develop forbearance because of maintenance. While maintaining we go through three stages which are described below.

Initially, the posture is shaky. A beginner cannot reach the final posture immediately. After gradual practice he reaches and achieves steadiness and this stage is called 'Sthira'. In this stage, however he is not able to maintain it for the prescribed length of time due to the effort involved. When he withdraws the effort by relaxation as per the suggestion of Pantanjali²² in the first half of Aphorism. II-47 "Prayatna-Saithilya", he reaches the stage 'Cira' in which he is able to maintain it for the prescribed length of time. The mind control begins here. In 'Sthira' the mind gets concentrated on the process of being in the final posture, but as the posture becomes effortless and natural the mind according to its nature starts wandering. To avoid this Pantanjali gives us a

method in the next half of the same Sutra (II-47) "Ananta-Samapatti" or contemplation on the infinite. Here the word 'Ananta' can be interpreted as the chosen deity, or the chosen sound (Mantra) or just expansiveness. When this is done the mind calms down and as it stays in silence it starts experiencing the bliss and this stage is called as 'Sukha'. Patanjali defines the nature of Asana in the previous Sutra (II-46) Viz: "Sthira-Sukham āsanam"—Posture (should be) steady and comfortable. The Sukha stage is comparable to Dhyāna. If the posture is 'Sukha' for an appreciably long time-subjectively variant-the person enters 'Asana-Siddhi' which is the superconscious state or 'Samādhi'. This is given by the subsequent sutra (II-48) "tato dvandvanabhighatah"—From that (mastery of the posture) no assaults from the pairs of opposites.

This is how we derive infinitely more than just the physical benefits.

(C) AN IDEAL HEALTHY BODY :

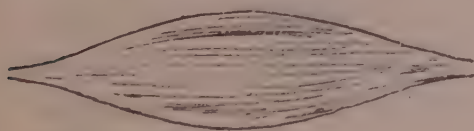
All the attempts of Kamsa to kill Kṛṣṇa have failed. He hits upon a brilliant plan of which he is sure of success. He hosts a carnival of fun and games to which he invites all people including Kṛṣṇa as well as Balarama. The obstacles are cleverly spaced from the main gate onwards. A rogue elephant attacks Kṛṣṇa and he kills it. Finally, the court wrestler Cāṇura challenges Kṛṣṇa and the wrestling bout is very beautifully described in Srimad Bhagavat.

Cāṇura is described as 'man-mountain' with very heavy body having rippling muscles exhibiting strength in every way. The gestures, facial expressions are also given. He is said to be tense, stiff, straining every muscle with an angry face. Contrary to it Kṛṣṇa's body described in it as well proportioned with a balanced growth, agile, capable of great speed in movements, having good reflexes, highly flexible, Komala-petal soft but stone hard when situation arises, naturally relaxed during action due to lack of strain. His psychology is also very congenial: his face is always smiling as if he is ready for sport, very keen observation due to tranquillity of mind and clarity of thought. He keenly observes the 'man-mountain' and notes that he has a slight limp on the right leg due to an injury in a past fight. When the fight begins, Kṛṣṇa fights-effortlessly and wins by using the strength of Cāṇura on himself!

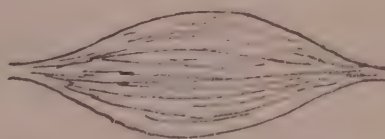
This gives us the characteristics of an ideal body:

1. Balanced and harmonious growth.
2. Great speed in movement due to agility.
3. Highly flexible.
4. Komala—but stone hard when the need arises.
5. Relaxation in action and hence conservation of energy.
6. Tranquillity of mind and clarity of thought. That is the harmony of thought. That is, the harmony of body and mind.

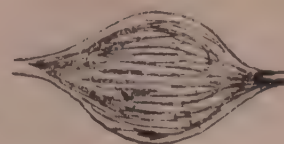
These characteristics can be achieved with the persistent and regular practice of Yogasanas. We shall have to go into some physiological details to understand this.



relaxed muscle



resting normal muscle



contracted muscle

BREATHING & PRĀṆĀYĀMA(a) Prāṇa & Prāṇāyāma

A muscle is said to be working when it is contracted. For example, if we want to lift the fore-arm then we have to work the biceps muscle and we see that when the fore-arm is raised then the bicep bulges indicating the contraction. Even when we are not working the muscle it is under partial contraction. A certain amount of energy is spent to keep it under this condition. This state of partial contraction is known as muscle tone. When we relax the muscle it elongates and the muscle Tone decreases. In the Yogasana^s the muscle gets elongated and stretched because of the nature of the postures and the maintenance. This is how the body attains the softness or Komalata. The figure illustrates the muscle in different conditions. The relaxation in action is achieved by the conscious relaxation while in the posture. The specialised nerve endings in the muscle fibres called the proprioceptors send the nerve-impulses to the brain giving the details of the amount of tension. In layman's language we can say that the proprioceptors provide us a sense of being. The messages through nerve impulses is stronger when it is contracted or stretched and this we utilise in learning the art of relaxation by the method of Auto suggestion. Thus the nervous system also gets toned up giving rise to better reflexes.

The effect of Yogasanas on mind discussed in (B) indicated that Yogasanas not only work on the Annamaya Kośa, but also operate in tune with bringing stability and harmony in other Kośas also.

The innate urge to grow characterises all living creatures. Locomotion, Reproduction as distinct from the inert dormant mineral world characterised the first offshoot of life. The vegetable kingdom in its higher species exhibits, greater locomotion. Examples are 'Touch-me-not' plants, 'Non vegetarian' plants (Drosera) etc. The next unfoldment we see is the movement in animals drawn by the basic urges for Food, Sleep, Fear and procreation. All activities are governed by instincts, in tune with these basic urges. In the higher species, the forefathers of 'Man', we find life blossoming with thinking. In Man, this 'thinking' is leading to greater regulation of all actions through discrimination rather than the unthinking instincts. Conscious thinking featured by discrimination replaces the instinctive behaviour. The higher faculties of man, making him a Super man and a Divine Man are now being brought to the fore through Yoga.

That basic vitality, key to life, is what we term Prāṇa. Thus, Prāṇa is the basic life principle. We believe that everything in creation has Prāṇa. Growth of Prāṇa from a lower strata to higher strata is the process that characterises life. In man, this process is being accelerated by the conscious discrimination faculty and is called 'PRĀṆĀYĀMA' regulation of Prāṇa. 'While the goal of life is to manifest the divinity in Man', the process of manifestation, a scientific method is 'PRĀṆĀYĀMA' or in general 'Yoga'.

The normal misconceptions about Prāna arise due to partial understanding that Prāna is the air entering in and going out; that which governs breath; that it is nothing but nerve impulses etc. But as we have seen Prāna is the basic life principle. In its dormant form, it exists in the mineral world. In the vegetable kingdom, the primary facets of Prāna, we can observe, started manifesting. As Prāna manifests more and more in the Animal and Human spectrums, newer faculties emerge. The structure of the body is also suitably transformed giving scope to the fuller manifestations of the higher emerging faculties—the mobile limbs and the senses in the animal world and the complex anatomy of the human body. In different parts of the body, different aspects of Prāna work with proper coordination and organisation between them. In the human system our seers have recognised 5 major facets of Prāna carrying on 5 major functions.

There are five different manifestations of Prāna in this system. This 'Prāna' is called Mukhya Prāna (the chief Prāna) to distinguish it from its other five manifestations namely Prāna, Apāna, Samāna, Vyāna and Udāna. They are described in Prasna Upaniṣat as follows:

Payupasthe Apānam Caksuh Śrothre
Mukhā Nāsikābhyām Prānaḥ Swayam
Pratiṣṭhate Madhye thu Samānah.

“The Apana is in the Organs of excretion and procreation; in the eye and the ear as well as in the mouth and the nose dwells the Prāṇa himself; and in the middle is the Samāna”.

The manifestation of Chief Prana in the lower regions of the abdomen is termed

as Apāna. Prāna acts in the upper regions—face, nose etc. which essentially corresponds to the force which activates breathing. That which keeps the balance between the upper and lower forces (Prāna and Apana) is called Samāna. Vyana is defined as:

“Hrdi, Hyesa Ātmā; Atraitadēkaśatam
Nādinam Tāsām Śatam Śatamēkaikaśyāḥ
Dva Saptatiḥ (Z) Pratisakha Sahasrāni
Bhavantyāsu Vyānascarati”.

“In the heart dwells Atman. There are (in the heart) a hundred branches in each one of the Nadis, and each of these branch Nādis again has seventy two thousand Nadis. In all these the Vyāna moves”.

Vyāna is that aspect of Chief Prāna that flows through each and every Nādi. It coordinates the functions of different aspects of Prāna.

(c) Schools in Prāṇayama :

Normally there are 3 components of breathing—Inhalation, Exhalation and Stoppage of breath. They are termed Puraka, Recaka and Kumbhaka respectively. In Kumbhaka the stoppage of breath can occur in 3 ways: after inhalation (Puraka or Āntarya Kumbhaka), after exhalation (Recaka or Sunya or Bahya Kumbhaka) and an automatic suspension of breath not due to a preceeding process of breathing (Kevala Kumbhaka). This last variety, Kevala Kumbhaka is the aim of all Pranayamas. In this stage there is no force inside urging us to breathe in or out. A natural suspension of breath is accomplished. This may be induced for a short time by a preceeding Kriya like Kapala-bhati due to hyper oxygenation, we get a

glimpse of what Kevala Kumbhaka is like. Recognition is half the solution, but it should not end there. We must learn to induce this stage of automatic cessation of breath without the preceeding Kriya. Thus, the real Kevala Kumbhaka is the goal of almost all breathing techniques we are getting acquainted with. There are various effects of this Kevala Kumbhaka — the deep relaxation, lowered metabolic rate, serene blissfulness, expansiveness and single thought, essentially the effects of Dhyana.

The ratio of Puraka, Āntarya Kumbhaka, Recaka and Bāhya Kumbhaka will be initially 4:4:4:2 (The numbers in the ratio could be taken as Seconds) minimum number of rounds. Gradually as one progresses, the Kumbhaka portion is increased 4:12:8:8, 4:16:8:12, — 4:32:8:16 etc. As the duration of Kumbhaka is increased more and more, some portion of the Kumbhaka will resemble Kevala Kumbhaka. Continued practice leads one to attain Kevala Kumbhaka for a longer duration.

While in the second type, emphasizing the slowness of Recaka and puraka, no forceful stoppage of breath — Kumbhaka is used. Instead, the time taken for each inhalation and exhalation is made to increase gradually. Associated with it will be the deep relaxation. As one progresses, one finds that an automatic cessation of breath is resulting as illustrated in the figure.



At the change over regions from Recaka to Puraka and Puraka to Recaka, a smoothening takes place resulting in Kevala Kumbhaka.

Associated with the first school, there is the danger of premature energy evocation, Kundalini shooting up without proper overall purification of the system in those who start doing for long durations. It may result in a disaster; neurotics and lunatics may be the outcome. One should work with precaution. The major point, many such wrecks miss, is the use of Bandhas with Kumbhaka—the Jālandhara and Mula Bandhas. If this precaution is taken and a disciplined life is followed, one could use this school with no dangers.

We have chosen the second, safe path. Relaxation resulting from slowing down of breath is the key. Both schools have the same aim, but the second involves lesser violent changes. It is smooth. Hence, you can notice, that in all the Prāṇāyāmās, we are not using Kumbhaka at all. But we would allow the automatic suspension of breath whenever it occurs. In fact, we should welcome it. Glimpses of Kevala Kumbhaka should be instilled in each and every Prāṇāyāma. That is the key. After prolonged practice of this method we proceed to introduce 'Kumbhaka' in the Prāṇāyāma in the follow-up Camps.

“Athaikayordhvam Udānah
Punyaena Punyam lokam Nayati
papena pam, Ubabhyāmeva
Manusya lokam”

“And then, through one of them (Susumna) the Udana carries (the soul) to the virtuous World by virtuous deeds, to the sinful World by the sinful acts, and by both to the world of men”. And Udana is the one that follows upwards in a subtle passage called Susumna. Normally this is not known to ordinary people. Prāṇāyāma is the science of regulating and gaining control over this Mukhya Prāṇa, allowing its fuller manifestations to emerge. But in particular we use regulation of breath

to gain control over Prāṇa. Hence, we need to understand the difference between normal breathing (which is normally haphazard flowing randomly through one or both the nostrils), Kriya (like Kapāla-bhāti 20), Yogic full breathing and Prāṇāyāma.

(b) Kriyas, Breathing & Prāṇāyāma :

Table below depicts clearly the difference between the Kriyas, Yogic full breathing and Prāṇāyāma.

TABLE DEPICTING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KRIYAS,
Yogic Full Breathing and Prāṇāyāma

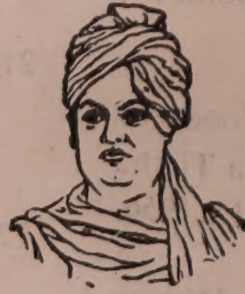
| Effect | Kriya | Yogic full breathing | Prāṇāyāma |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Breathing Rate | About 120/mt. Washing away of CO ₂ Increased Oxygen concentration | About 15/mt. Full utilization of correct normal breathing. | Less than 5/mt. |
| 2. Muscular | Exercised briskly | Complete Movement of muscles. | Controlled slow movement |
| 3. Circulation | Greatly Increased, greater concentration of Oxygen in blood stream. | Slightly increased. More O ₂ gets absorbed. | Less than Normal |
| 4. Nervous System | Quick, repetitive nerve impulses, stimulating in effect (Sympathetic chain activated) | Normalised nerve impulses. | Longer duration Nerve impulses (Sustained Parasympathetic activation) |
| 5. Brain cells | Respiratory centre gets stimulated. It may stimulate other cells also. | Overactivity & under activity normalised. | Cells work with higher Co ₂ content. They are kept active with lesser O ₂ Consumption. |

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. Metabolic Rate : | Increased greatly. Energy expenditure is more | Normalised. Proper utilization of energy. | Decreased considerably. Energy conserved, Dorment energies are evoked. |
| 7. Over all effect | Shatters 'Tamas' Laziness gone, man becomes active | Channelises the 'Rajas' Unnecessary wastage of energy is cut. Becomes Healthier. | * Mind moves towards silence. * Potential capabilities are evoked. * Greater efficiency results. * Fresh, Relaxed, Dynamic. |

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